

# A Benefit For You

BEST CARE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



## EAP NOTES

### A+ Communication Skills

Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.

~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh

For many of us, our last English exam was years ago. However, proper communication skills remain a priority. In order to function day to day, whether personally or professionally, it's essential to accurately relay information. Having effective speaking and writing skills is crucial. The ability to express yourself via cell phone, e-mail, video conferencing and instant messaging is gaining importance. Regardless of what communication method you choose, first-rate skills will always serve you well.

Show off your communication savvy skills by using the following tips.

- ✉ **Listen.** Communication is a two way process, beginning with attentive listening. When listening to the speaker be open-minded and avoid interruptions. In addition, be aware of the non-verbal message you are sending the speaker through your body language. Eye contact expresses to the speaker that you are interested and engaged in the conversation.
- ✉ **Think** before you speak, or write, or hit send. Make sure the message you are sending is clear to the receiver. If you are having difficulty, consider preparing an outline to clarify your objectives. Even a quick phone call or e-mail should be well organized and easy to understand.
- ✉ What **delivery** to use? Although there is no substitute for face-to-face communication, e-mail, fax and telephone are all acceptable means of correspondence. Professional e-mail messages should contain your contact information including name, company, title, telephone and fax numbers. This information can be included in your signature file. Information sent via fax should also contain contact information and the number of pages sent. When leaving a voice mail make sure to clearly and slowly state your name and telephone number.
- ✉ **Edit** in order to avoid costly mistakes. Your written word is often a direct reflection of your knowledge or ability. Proofreading can help you avoid simple, yet embarrassing, errors. If you're still unsure, try reading aloud or asking a co-worker for his or her opinion. Try not to rely solely on your computer software to find spelling and grammar errors. For example, in your computer's world both "write" and "right" are correct.
- ✉ **Ask questions** and follow-up with the receiver to keep the lines of communication open. The communication cycle only works when the sender sends clear and accurate information to the receiver. If the receiver is unable to act or proceed with the information, the cycle is broken.

*Clear, open communication is essential to any good relationship --- personal or professional. For more information, contact your Best Care EAP at (402) 354-8000 or 800-666-8606. A professional counselor is available to help.*

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